

STATE OF INDIANA) IN THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
COUNTY OF MONROE) SS: CAUSE: TAXPAYER JUSTICE
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON)

JOE DAVIS, CHRISTOPHER RIOS-SIELAFF,)
DAREAL RUBLE, JOSH SIMMONS,)
DAVID COLMAN, MICHELLE MARTIN)
COLMAN, MARC HAGGERTY,)
MARK HARPER, SIENNA M. HARPER,)
And ASHTON HARPER,)
 Petitioners,)
 v.)
)
KERRY THOMSON, MAYOR, EXECUTIVE)
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, and)
)
COMMON COUNCIL, LEGISLATIVE,)
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON,)
 Respondents.)

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON TAXPAYER OBJECTION PETITION OF BUDGET, TAX RATE, OR TAX LEVY

COMES NOW Taxpaying Petitioners, from the City of Bloomington, file this *City of Bloomington Taxpayer Objection Petition of Budget, Tax Rate, or Tax Levy*, against the proper officers, Kerry Thomson, Mayor, Executive, City of Bloomington (the “Executive”), and the Common Council, Legislative, City of Bloomington (the “Legislative”), for relief from actions taken by the same in the proposed, and accepted, Civil City Budget public hearing that took place on September 25, 2024. as these actions were potentially in violation/denial of both Petitioner’s Constitutional and Statutory rights to due process, and representation, under the law, we ask for findings to be made by the proper officers of said Executive, and Legislative, bodies. We further ask that this Taxpayer Objection Petition, and the findings of the proper officers, be incorporated into, and attached to, the 2025 adopted Bloomington Civil City Budget, as per state

statute..... This 2025 Budget will be adopted, on or around October 9, 2024. In support of such relief, Petitioners state the following:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. We, the concerned Taxpaying citizens of Bloomington Indiana seek that all appropriations to be used for any part of the proposed expansion of the Monroe County Convention Center be frozen in escrow until the citizenry may conduct a full investigation of the legalities of the formation of the Capital Improvement Board (the “CIB”), the body that has taken over the ownership of the public’s land east of the current Monroe County Convention Center located at 302 S. College Avenue in Bloomington, Indiana, 47403. Located in the heart of downtown Bloomington, this voluminous block of public land was recently usurped by the CIB, an un-elected board of seven, that was charged with a duty of care to protect the public’s interests. Sadly, the CIB has been negligent to the people of Bloomington, and Monroe County in this capacity. This negligence has resulted in the promotion of an expanded Monroe County Convention Center on one of the most valuable public lands that the citizens of Bloomington, and Monroe County, have left to institute real civic community benefit, at a time of crisis in our City, and Monroe County environs.

2. This potentially un-constitutional CIB was created when the former Executive of the City of Bloomington identified a vanity potential coup of the public’s land being owned, and managed by the Monroe County Board of Commissioners (the “Commissioners”). The Commissioners were charged to protect the public’s investment in reserve for the highest and best use of said public’s civic opportunity to address the public’s most pressing needs in service. The former Executive of the City of Bloomington saw an opportunity to wrest away this un-guarded public land held in trust by the elected Board of Commissioners of Monroe County. Our negligent

Commissioners were brought into a contentious tug-of-war of which both the citizens of the City of Bloomington, who are also citizens of the County, and the citizens of the County outside of the City of Bloomington boundaries, became tiresome. In response to this community angst, it was proposed by the former Executive to create a neutral body that would protect the best interests of the Taxpayers represented by both City, and County.

3. In an effort to anti-up for a City/County partnership for a potential expansion of the Monroe County Convention Center, the former Executive overpaid using the City Taxpayers public money to purchase the Bunger & Robetson property just north of 3rd Street across from the existing Monroe County Convention Center. A story was sold to the public, that this potential expansion of the Monroe County Convention Center would take place on this property. The current Convention Center and its appurtenant expansion north would be connected by a sky bridge across 3rd Street, similar to the B-line trail that crosses 3rd Street just one half block to the west. Soothed by the story of this collaboration, the former executive proposed the creation of the CIB to manage the expansion project. Again, the public was told that the CIB would provide a duty of care to all public taxpaying parties. With that the citizens of both City, and County, let their eyes off the prize of public serving good believing that social equity and justice had finally come to our treasured community of Bloomington/Monroe.

4. In a less-than-transparent way, the CIB was formally chartered under this guise of serving the Taxpaying public. Little did that public know that these unelected CIB board members would take over ownership of the public's land held in trust by the Commisioners of Monroe County. To add further insult to injury, The CIB performed a bait-and-switch, abandoning the former Executives overpaid purchase of the former Bunger & Roberton property north of the existing Convention Center and usurped the public' land east held in trust by the Commisioners.

Unfortunately, the CIB was populated by appointment, with no oversight by the public. This lack of oversight has resulted in the transfer of the public's wealth to a body that will hold control of the public wealth in perpetuity, and commit the public to a perpetuity of subsidization of an unsustainable concept that will never be able to self-fund itself. To our knowledge, no cost-benefit analysis has ever been performed on the existing Convention Center, let alone the tens of millions of taxpayer's dollars that are proposed to be spent on a glorified YMCA that will host Basketball, Volleyball, and Pickle ball tournaments, where people from all over the nation will come to Bloomington to desecrate what is special about our community. This watering down of our local culture will result in a Las Vegas Circus Circus type culture that will bring vomit, and public urination to our humble town, and County. Why are we competing with Indianapolis to bring something that the majority of our citizens do not want? The 2023 City of Bloomington Community Survey with nearly 1000 respondent's found that only 18% of the City population thought that the expansion of the Monroe County Convention Center was important. In other words, 82% of the population did not wish this boondoggle of a venture to take place.

Furthermore, Joe Davis, Candidate for Monroe County Council at Large, and also a resident of the City sampled over 2000 individuals across the City and County with an overwhelming majority of those individuals not wishing for an expansion of the Convention Center, and a smaller, yet sizable number having no opinion at all.

5. Therefore, we the Taxpaying Objection Petitioners of the City of Bloomington demand that no monies be appropriated for the expansion of the Monroe County Convention Center, at this time. There are more pressing matters to attend to like our overwhelming un-housed, and un-medicated population, affordable housing, and other social equity and justice needs. With that let's pump the brakes and bring the communities needs back to the fore.

Respectfully submitted,

The Taxpayers of the City of Bloomington